

# **THE ROCKVILLE ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION FY 2010 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FY 2011 GOALS**

September 2010

## **Introduction**

The Mayor and Council established the Environment Commission in a resolution dated October 28, 2002. Its predecessor, the Science, Technology and the Environment Commission was established in 1985. The Environment Commission is pleased to present its FY 2010 Accomplishments and its FY 2011 Goals to the Mayor and Council, City staff and the citizens of Rockville. We have organized our submission to reflect our own organizational structure:

### **Overall Environment Commission Activities Sustainable Design and Energy Committee Actions Watersheds Committee Actions Outreach Committee Actions**

The Committees were established in FY 2006 to meet the growing workload of the Commission, and to broaden the network of experts supporting the Commission's activities. Areas of focus were selected in accordance with the tasking by the Mayor and Council and city staff, community input from Commission-sponsored events, and Commission's own agenda for recommendations to the City. Each Committee is comprised of at least two Commissioners as well as community volunteers who either live or work in the City. Recruitment for these committees is done on an ongoing basis and no restrictions exist at this time on the number of volunteers per committee.

## **Accomplishments of FY 2010 (July 2009 - June 2010)**

### **Overall Environment Commission Activities**

- Provided issue analyses and testimony to Mayor and Council on various environmental and sustainability issues and opportunities facing the City.
- Provided the Environmental Management Division of Public Works with technical support, policy analyses and resident perspectives on various environmental and sustainability matters, including stormwater (City Code Chapter 19) and the Green Building program (City Code Chapter 5).
- Adopted a stream segment of Maryvale Creek to maintain it in a trash-free condition. Organized 11 volunteers for a stream clean up event that resulted in 11 bags of trash. Another clean-up event is planned for the fall.
- Attended a day-long strategic retreat facilitated by Environmental Management personnel to focus the Commission's priorities.

- Represented Rockville in the Four-City Environment Commission Meeting in December 2009 held with the Commissions of Annapolis, Bowie and Gaithersburg. This first of its kind meeting was successful. Rockville volunteered to host a similar meeting on October 13, 2010.
- Researched and awarded Environmental Excellence Awards for residents in three categories, including *Outstanding Environmental Education and Academic Achievement*, *Outstanding Leadership in Environmental Practices*, and *Outstanding Individual Environmental Achievement*.
- Participated in the *white tailed deer task force* to investigate the need and methodology for managing the Rockville deer herds.
- Toured the Rockville water treatment plant
- Judged the annual Earth Day Environmental Photo Contest. There were 40 photos entered in four age categories. The winning photos were displayed at City Hall and other locations around the City.
- Discussed a proposed graffiti ordinance with the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board.
- Held a joint meeting with the Rockville Historic District Commission and members of the City's Planning Commission

### **Sustainable Design and Energy Committee Actions**

- Reviewed numerous drafts of the proposed green building ordinance (City Code Chapter 5) and discussed it in detail with City staff. Testified in favor of the proposal before the Mayor and Council. The revised ordinance was adopted on May 10, 2010.
- Reviewed a green building incentives white paper drafted by the Environmental Management Division. Approached the Rockville Chamber of Commerce about working on joint recommendations for *beyond compliance* incentives.

### **Watersheds Committee Actions**

- Reviewed and commented on the Draft Water Resources Element of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan addressing drinking water, wastewater and stormwater issues anticipated over the next 20 years.
- Reviewed the City's existing salt policy and application procedures. Encouraged the City to begin routine salinity measurements in City waters.
- Attended and helped present the Rockville *Invasive Plant ID and Water Chemistry Training* at Croydon Creek Nature Center. Participated in a community *garlic mustard* invasive species pull.
- Attended a community Rainbarrel Workshop.
- Encouraged the City staff to require developers to make full use of *brownfields* before turning to *greenfields* for new construction
- Encouraged the City to promote increased use of porous pavements as an on-site, stormwater measure.
- Attended the "State of Our Streams" Watershed Restoration Implementation Strategy workshop hosted by Montgomery County and the Maryland Department of the Environment.

### **Outreach Committee Actions**

- Sponsored and staffed a booth during Science Day, Earth Day and Hometown Holidays. The Committee helped plan and invite *green* vendors to participate in the events. These sessions focused on recruiting new Commissioners and Committee members, residential recycling, energy efficiency and improving water quality.
- Analyzed the City's environmentally-related webpages and made suggestions for content and style improvements.
- Launched a set of recycling messages on Facebook, including one to remind people to recycle waste generated during Superbowl parties.
- Improved outreach capability by designing a three-panel display board, purchasing a table-top watershed model; and obtaining donations for flexible display materials to be used at public outreach events such as Science Day and Hometown Holidays.

- Recognized and promoted participation in *Earth Hour* (when residents, businesses and governments turn off lights for one hour) through Facebook, and via a proclamation recognizing *Earth Hour* by the Mayor and Council.
- Drafted residential sustainable tips for an issue of *Rockville Reports*.
- Created a video documenting and promoting Rockville's stream clean-up events.

## **Environment Commission Goals for FY 2011**

### *Recruit Additional Talent to the Commission*

- Fill the Commission vacancies and recruit additional Environment Commission Committee members for the Outreach Committee, the Watersheds Committee and the Sustainable Design and Energy Committee.

### *Strengthen Working Relationships*

- Pursue a closer working relationship with the Mayor and Council through the Council Liaison.
- Engage in more frequent briefings, joint meetings and other communication with Council members.
- Pursue similar relationships with the Planning Commission Recreation and Parks Advisory Board and the Historic District Commission.
- Continue to work with the Environmental Commissions of Annapolis, Bowie, Gaithersburg and Greenbelt.

### *Improve Commissioner's Understanding of the City*

- Work with the City Clerk's office to develop training for new Board and Commission members.
- Identify and prioritize budget needs early in the City's fiscal year.

### *Engage Others in Sustainability and Environmental Matters*

- Participate in the White Tailed Deer Management Task Force.
- Advise the Mayor and Council and City staff on Green Building implementation issues and *beyond-compliance* incentives.
- Advise the Mayor and Council and City staff on stormwater management issues.
- Develop a proposed policy on the application of winter-storm road salts.
- Pursue adoption of an anti-graffiti ordinance through Code Enforcement.

### *Conduct a Vigorous Environmental Education Campaign*

- Continue to improve the sustainability and environmental content of the City website and consider how social media vehicles can be used to reach out to the public.

- Continue to participate in *Earth Day*, *Science Day*, and *Hometown Holidays* as well as other important City or neighborhood-sponsored community events. Consider getting involved with *Rotary Runfest*, weekly Farmers Markets, the Thursday Night Summer Concert Series, *Wine Fest* or the Car Show. Focus on topics including: recycling, energy efficiency, alternative energy generation, home composting, and submission of environmental excellence award nominations.
- Promote increased residential recycling by:
  - Developing and distributing a recycling reminder magnet that describes unique recycling opportunities available to Rockville residents.
  - Drafting and distributing an energy and sustainability tip calendar. Consider using photos from the Earth Day photo contest.
- Encourage residents and businesses to participate in Earth Hour and the Superbowl energy reduction and recycling events.
- Promote and evaluate nominations for the City Environmental Excellence Awards
- Recruit Rockville schools looking for service projects to help with environmental tasks.
- Involve the Boy and Girl Scout Troops in the water quality activities.
- Draft *Rockville Reports* articles on water quality and stormwater issues.
- Create A *Rockville Youth & Environment* program, possibly in partnership with Cable Channel 11.
- Create new brochures on stormwater, energy savings opportunities, and water quality issues
- Establish a “reuse” network for residents and identify some type of reward for residents reaching zero refuse.
- Initiate a *Rockville Recycles* blog.